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THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CIRCUS ART IN THE INTEGRATION OF AZERBAIJANI CULTURE

abstract. The article highlights the theoretical and organizational issues in the background of the professional history of Azerbaijani national circus art and deals with the tasks of modern circus during period of globalization, preservation of our national-spiritual values and the works that can be done to promote them in the world. Basing on the historical experience of Azerbaijani circus, it is noted that the circus art has great opportunities than the other types of art in bringing our national values to the world according to its specific peculiarities. Therefore, there is a need to mobilize our talented circus artists acted around the world, also the creative forces in our republic and to direct them to development of this field.

Key words: globalization, national-spiritual values, circus art, festivals, tours

Introduction. Azerbaijan, the first democratic republic of the East, has been going through an honorable development since the restoration of state independence again. Radical changes in the sociopolitical, socioeconomic spheres, expansion of the mass media and communication means contribute to the rapid integration of our country to the global space. Besides the successes of our republic in the production, trade, the use of new technologies, the globalization of the world influences our culture and our national values are under the threat to be lost. Taking into account these factors, a number of important projects have been implemented to protect the cultural heritage in our country and promote them in the world since the first years of our independence.

“Our country has been a member of UNESCO since June 1992. UNESCO and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum of cooperation in 1996. Our relations with this influential organization are developing according to science, education and culture of UNO since then. A Member of Parliament, President of Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva was honored with the name of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for her tireless effort in the preservation and development of Azerbaijani folklore and music on August 13, 2004. The relation between this organization and Azerbaijan has begun to develop exactly since then. UNESCO has been working successively on preserving human values and bringing them to the future generations. Azerbaijan’s intangible cultural samples have also attracted the attention of this organization and mugham art, Novruz holiday, ashug and carpet art, which are our national-spiritual values, are included in Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of this organization” [2, p. 4]. A number of new achievements have also been made in this area in recent years, Chovgan horse game performed with Garabagh horse, Nakhchivan’s traditional group dances – yalli, kochari, tanzara, Azerbaijani tar performance art and its making mastery and other samples are included in the UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List. “State Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Azerbaijan” portal was created by the Ministry of Culture last year.

The interpretation of the main material. It should be noted that national circus art also has great potential in the integration of our culture into the world space. The opportunities of circus art were widely used to promote our national culture during Soviet period. The history of Azerbaijani circus, its modern condition and some theoretical issues should be highlighted to value this potential. The circus as a type of synthetic art has its own specific means of expression besides embracing many types of art. There is no language barrier, no age limit in the circus show and shows can influence equally on all nations, children and adult. Because of ancient folk shows, arena shows, ceremonies that carry our traditions play an important role in the genesis of our national circus art, the appeal of our artists to our national folklore, ethnographic plot, use of ancient show elements in the modern arena are associated with the audience.

These peculiarities were seen especially in the shows of the first Azerbaijani National Circus collective that created by the initiative of USSR People’s Artist, great composer, prominent public figure Uzeyirbey Hajibeyli and it confirms that the circus art with its historical and cultural roots reflects the

peculiar characteristics of the people it represents as other types of art. This colorful, rich circus show that called “Azerbaijani wedding” was premiered in Baku circus on June 12, 1946, then it was successfully performed in Moscow circus and various cities of USSR [4, p. 75]. The show consisted of three parts. “Wedding” ethnographic show was performed in the first part. There was a large carpet decorated with national ornaments on the arena. Bride and groom entered the arena under the sounds of the national music. As if the colorful clothes on guests around them completed the patterns of the carpets on the arena. The funny “Kos-kosa” show was performed after the bride’s friend performed the “Samani” dance, then snake-charmer show was performed by Sofu Jafarov, wizard show by Ismayıl Mirzayev, plastic etude show “Kauchuk” by Shuriya Samadova.

As if the second part of the show was a continuation of the wedding. First, the “Star sisters” (Anna Aghayeva, Galina Nazirova and Shafiga Bakhshaliyeva) were dancing on the rope in the arena. They continued the beautiful dance on the rope that they performed below. As if Rza Alikhan’s rope-dance show “Lezginka” formed unity with the girls’ dance on the rope at the end of the second part.

The third part was devoted to the “Zorkhana” show, which was performed by the strongest athletes of Azerbaijan. The wrestlers performed various actions with “needle”, “zanjirkaman” and other instruments at the beginning. Then wrestler SaliSuleyman performed solo show. The athletes wrestled in the end. The collective who inspired by their first successes continued their tours in the capitals and big cities of allied republics.

As can be seen, the show of Azerbaijani national circus collective had a strong ethnographic content, national spirit and emotional influence. One point should be emphasized – because of the circus show is a combination of dangerous and comic situations, the emotional state of the audience causes them to understand better the meaning of the show plot and idea, to remember what they see for a long time. It is no coincidence that Azerbaijani national circus collective was greeted with great enthusiasm in every part of the Soviet Union and performed successfully. Since that time, circus shows with great staff were created several times (1954, 1959, 1966 and 1987) by the participation of Azerbaijani circus artists. The common peculiarity that characterizes the performance of this collective, also the importance assumed for our Republic were their presentation in the national spirit. According to a prominent scientist and stateswoman, professor Rabiyyat Aslanova,

“nationalism is a phenomenon that combines not only political, social shades, but also moral-cultural, spiritual shades as one of the fundamental principles of state system. The basis of nationalism is national spirit and national consciousness” [1, p. 179].

Today Azerbaijani circus still has a great potential. Our artists work in different countries of the world and performance great skill. One of the most notable representatives of modern Azerbaijani circus is a trainer Tofiq Akhundov. Tofiq Akhundov, who has performed with tamed hippopotamuses and monkey for many years, was honored with the title of People's Artist of Azerbaijan and Russia, his name was written in the history of the world circus art. Tofiq Akhundov has performed successfully in many countries of the world and the animals that he trained have been acted in films.

One of the artists who represent our circus art in the international arena is Erik Israfilov. His circus show with national color and rich juggles, which he performed with tamed camels in Azerbaijani National Circus Collective created in 1987, is still considered one of the best shows in this genre. Erik's son Aydin Israfilov (01.01.1980) shows also a very complex circus show since teenage years. He enters the arena on a monowheel, at the same time he juggles and performs with tamed monkey. He has gone on a tour to many countries around the world with this show and performed successfully at various great festivals and competitions. Erik's nephew Allahverdi Israfilov also continues the traditions of this circus family. His air gymnastic show with his partner Galina Golovachova distinguishes by the complexity of juggles and the romantic style. They performed successfully at the famous Monte Carlo circus festival in 2012 and were awarded with “Bronze Clown” [6].

Few people know about Novruzov brothers in Azerbaijan, who have won the sympathy of millions for their talent abroad. Oktay performs acrobatic force show with his younger brother Telman. Besides this, Oktay, who is loved for his humorous “conductor” character on the rope, has worked and performed in international circus festival in various countries of Europe for many years. His brother Uzeyir, who performs balancing show with a ladder, has achieved great successes in his genre. After graduating the School of Circus and Variety Arts in Moscow in 1998, the talented young man worked at the Big Moscow Circus, “Big Apple Circus” of United States of America. Then Uzeyir was invited to the famous “Corteo” show of the world's number one circus “Cirque du Soleil”. He entered the Guinness Book of Records for staying 7 minutes 50 seconds on a 6 meter ladder in 2016. There is a great need

for popularizing the works of Novruzov brothers, also other talented circus artists in our Republic and to present them as a representative of Azerbaijani circus art and our national culture in the world.

Araz Hamzayev, who has been successful in many circuses of Europe since the age of nine, performs a very rare and difficult “Contortionist” genre (this genre is also known as “Boneless man”, “Snake Man”). He was invited to Las Vegas program of “Cirque du Soleil” for several years as one of the best performers of this show. The main feature that distinguishes Araz from other artists is that he has entered the arena with the flag of Azerbaijan in all international programs since childhood and represented as representative of Azerbaijan in all television show at his request. Another compatriot, acrobat Ayla Ahmadova, who has come to circus art from Azerbaijan sport, performed successfully first in “Varekai” program, then “O” program of “Cirque du Soleil” circus company.

Another artist Anar Jabrailov, who performs with hats in juggler genre, also attracts attention with his brilliant talent in recent years. He performed successfully and won at influential international circus festivals held in Israel in 2015, in Pyongyang, North Korea in 2018 [5].

As can be seen, today we have many world-class, talented compatriots in circus art. Because of lack of proper attention to the development of this art in Azerbaijan, the majority of them works in foreign companies and become a citizen of those countries. It should be noted that unfortunately our compatriots represent not Azerbaijan, but other countries on tours and in prestigious festivals in different cities of the world. However, as we have mentioned, the promotion of national values is easier in circus art than in other types of art. The basis and core of the circus art is juggles – extraordinary, fascinating performance of artists. But these actions don’t carry any artistic load. The artist’s movements, music, choreography, plastics, clothes, etc. become an art work by enriching them with attributes within the artistic character he wants to create.

Circus art is economically profitable. It is possible to create company consisting of scenario author, producer, composer, choreographers and other leading artists by inviting Azerbaijani circus artists from abroad and to make national show with their participation. Because of the new circus program with a national spirit has a great value in international arena, every country welcomes this program. Such a circus show would be a valuable means for famous of performers and our homeland to be famous. It is possible to realize

what we said on the scale of the circus program. A new, different approach is needed to prevent threats in circus field that globalization creates for our national culture. Our thoughts coincide with words of notable culturologist-scientist, professor Fuad Mammadov: "It is important to direct forces from observation to creativity, from valuation of cultural events to understand and change the world around us. It is important to solve this problem on the basis of a systematic approach, within the new state policy in the field of culture. The new national ideology that supports the integration of cultural innovations with traditional national values and cultural heritage in the field of science, education, high technologies, social and ecological culture should form the basis of new policy" [3, p. 270].

Conclusion. First, the circus art's development concept should be prepared for the development and promotion of national circus art in the world. The proper potential should be seek in Baku State Circus, which operates as a stationary circus and invites three programs from abroad every year and is satisfied with performing these programs. Circus collective, who is free nine months of the year, can prepare young circus artists, demonstrate circus shows in all cities of the Republic, collect circus programs and organize tours to the neighboring countries under the flag of Azerbaijan, etc. Early, the circus had such international experience, Baku State Circus performed successfully in different cities in Iran and Turkey many times during 1992-2002.

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Rəcəb Məmmədov (Azərbaycan)

**Azərbaycan mədəniyyətinin dünyaya integrasiyasında
milli sirk sənətinin rolu**

Məqalədə Azərbaycan milli sirk sənətinin peşəkar tarixi fonunda nəzəri və təşkilati problemləri önə çəkilərək, qloballaşma dövründə müasir sirkin qarşısında duran vəzifələrdən, milli-mənəvi dəyərlərimizin qorunması və dünyada təbliği üçün görülə biləcək işlərdən bəhs olunur. Azərbaycan sirkinin tarixi təcrübəsinə istinad olunaraq qeyd edilir ki, sirk sənəti, öz spesifik xüsusiyyətlərinə görə, milli dəyərlərimizin dünyaya çıxarılması məsələsində, digər sənət növləri ilə müqayisədə, daha böyük imkanlara malikdir. Bu səbəbdən dünyanın müxtəlif yerlərində çıxış edən istedadlı sirk artistlərimizi, eləcə də respublikadakı yaradıcı qüvvələri səfərbər edərək, bu sahənin inkişafına yönəltməyə ehtiyac var.

Açar sözlər: qloballaşma, milli-mənəvi dəyərlər, sirk sənəti, festivallar, qastrollar

Раджаб Мамедов (Азербайджан)

**Роль национального циркового искусства в интеграции
азербайджанской культуры в мировое пространство**

В статье освещаются теоретические и организационные проблемы в контексте профессиональной истории азербайджанского национального циркового искусства, рассматриваются цели, стоящие перед современным цирком в эпоху глобализации, определяются задачи по защите и продвижению наших национально-духовных ценностей в мире. Ссылаясь на исторический опыт азербайджанского цирка, отмечается, что благодаря своим специфическим особенностям, цирковое искусство обладает большими возможностями, чем другие виды искусства, в распространении наших национальных ценностей в мире. Поэтому существует необходимость мобилизовать наших талантливых цирковых артистов выступающих по всему миру, а также творческие силы в стране, для развития этого направления.

Ключевые слова: глобализация, национально-духовные ценности, цирковое искусство, фестивали, гастроли